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SEXUAL CRIMES AMONG THE SOUTHERN NEGROES.

Duke

BY

HUNTER McGUIRE, M. D., LL. D.,

AND

G. FRANK LYDSTON, M. D.

PUBLISHED BY

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LOUISVILLE, KY.

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Harvard College

SEXUAL CRIMES

AMONG THE SOUTHERN NEGROES, SCIENTIFICALLY CONSIDERED.

AN OPEN CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN

HUNTER McGUIRE, M. D., LL. D., OF RICHMOND, VA.

President American Medical Association; Ex-President Southern Surgical and Gynæcological Association, Etc.,

—AND—

G. FRANK LYDSTON, M. D., OF CHICAGO, ILL.,

Professor of Genito-Urinary Surgery and Syphilology Chicago College of Physicians and Surgeons; Surgeon to Cook County Hospital; Fellow of the American Academy of Social and Political Science, Etc.

RICHMOND, VA., March 11, 1893.

Dear Dr. Lydston,—After reading your article* on "*Sexual Perversion,*" I am induced to ask you to give me, if it is possible, some scientific explanation of the sexual perversion in the negro of the present day.

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*"Essays and Addresses," published by Renz & Henry, Louisville, Ky.

Before the late war between the States, a rape by a negro of a white women was almost unknown; now the newspapers tell us how common it is. The crime of a negro assaulting a white woman or female child seems to be growing in frequency. Death—certain, swift, and merciless—is the penalty. This is the unwritten law of every community in the South; from it there is no appeal. It is immutable, and is sustained by every living white in the community in which the crime occurs. I am not engaged here in defending this law, although it is easy to do it. I am trying only to give you some facts on which to base your opinion, in a purely scientific discussion.

It is not the legal, social, moral or political aspect of this perverted sexuality in the negro upon which I ask your opinion. The subject has been discussed in these ways, and without any good. I want you, if you will, to investigate it as a scientific physician—one who has devoted much time to this and kindred matters. I do not know, in all this land, one so capable as yourself of making the examination complete, and I sincerely hope the investigation may result in some benefit to the negro race.

In the South, the negro is deteriorating morally and physically; and, as the American Indian, the native Australian, the native Sandwich Islander, and other inferior races, disappear before the Caucasian, so the negro, in time, will disappear from this continent. It is only a question of time. All history, from the days of early Rome, shows that no inferior race, without amalgamation, can exist for very many years in contact with the dominant white man; it is the frightful "survival of the fittest."

The ingenious Census Bureau tells another story, you may say. Well, the ingenious Census Bureau

has, for many years, been telling many stories, and this is, just now, as far as it is worth while to discuss this point.

During the days of slavery, insanity was very uncommon among the negro race. Now, our large asylums are not capacious enough to hold the insane negroes of both sexes.

Before the War, the negroes were fed upon the food which of all others conduced to their health: "hog and hominy" was the main ration, and, with this, an abundance of bread, milk and vegetables. Now, their thriftlessness makes them sometimes suffer for a sufficiency of food, and that obtained is not always of a suitable kind. Many of the most improvident have scarcely enough clothes to hide their bodies, and when able to buy, they generally select flashy and thin flimsy garments that poorly protect them from wet and cold. Their clothes are very different now from the thick, warm homespun they formerly wore. We have also intemperance, excess, and impure air from overcrowding and want of ventilation, adding their share to the trouble. Mental depression and anxiety are also common. Laughter and music, universal with them before the War, are now rarely heard. There are many and very notable exceptions to the above, of course, but I am describing the negro masses.

In this State, during the period of slavery, "scrofula," as the word was then understood, was a frequent affection among the negroes. It was shown by the swollen glands, by the tumid belly, by certain ophthalmias, and cutaneous eruptions. The negro was called "scrofulous," and considered disfigured, rather than disabled. Pulmonary phthisis and other purely tubercular diseases, while common enough in

the mulatto, were comparatively infrequent in the negro. Now, however, scrofula in the negro seems to have terminated in what has been called its "essential element," and tuberculosis is fearfully common. (I use the words in the senses in which they were then employed.) It is difficult to find in a dissecting-room a negro subject free from tubercular deposit. Another disease that I will only mention—syphilis—is frightfully common.

I cannot speak of the negroes who have moved to the North and West. I have no means of definitely knowing their condition.

If, in treating this subject, some other besides a scientific view is necessary for its complete consideration, don't hesitate to use it.

The newspaper men in the North—by no means all, I am glad to say, but in many instances—in reporting some of the crimes of which I am writing, seem to see only the fearful spectacle of a hung, burnt or shot negro. They seem unable to see the innocent, mutilated, and ruined female victim and her people; but this is another kind of perversion of mind and heart that neither you, I know, nor I care to discuss.

Sincerely your friend,

HUNTER MCGUIRE.

CHICAGO, March 16, 1893.

My Dear Doctor McGuire, — I consider myself highly honored by your letter relative to the sexual peculiarities of the negro. Your eminent position in the profession and your wide range of information make your request for my opinion peculiarly flatter-

ing. I fear, however, that I am not capable of doing the subject justice, as the question at issue is one of vital importance, and also one which I have seriously considered; I will, nevertheless, answer you to the best of my ability.

You will pardon me, I am sure, for touching upon certain phases and relations of the matter which you have expressly intimated should be left out of our correspondence. I believe in "taking the bull by the horns," and do not consider it justifiable to leave any salient points untouched. I know the liberality of my Southern friends—of whom I believe no Northern doctor has more than myself—and I feel certain that they will take all that I may say exactly in the spirit in which it is written. Believe me also when I state that any bias which may appear to be in favor of what has been termed the "Southern method" of dealing with the criminality of the negro, is by no means due to a desire to pat my Southern friends upon the back, but is based upon absolutely independent reflection. I know that this statement to you, who know me so well, is unnecessary; but it is well to remember that this is an open letter, and liable to misinterpretation—wilful or otherwise. So much for my platform.

The term "sexual perversion," as applied to the class of crimes committed by the negro to which you allude, cannot, in the strictest sense of the term, be justified scientifically. Sexual perversion, in the abstract, implies an aberration of the sexual passion which impels to abnormal methods of gratification with the opposite sex or methods (necessarily abnormal) with the same sex. The only qualification in the case of ordinary rape is that involving criminal assault upon children. Here, strange to say, we

often find a class of cases where the criminal has no desire for female adults, but for female children only. I, of course, cannot exactly say how frequent such cases are among negroes, but I firmly believe them to be relatively more frequent among the white race, in whom it may be either inherent or acquired. Rape, however, under the stimulus of this abnormal passion, is not so liable to be perpetrated by the white man for the reason that certain inhibitory influences, such as pride, fear of punishment and ordinary self-control, are more effective in the white than in the black race. Relative to this form of sexual perversion, I will call your attention to the *Pall Mall Gazette* exposures in London some years ago.

I might remark in passing that, nothwithstanding the horrible crimes perpetrated under the influence of the *furor sexualis* by the negro, particularly in the South, I believe that he compares quite favorably as regards sexual impulses—taking all abnormalities into consideration—with the white race. The more I see of white men in so-called refined society, the more contempt I have for quite a large proportion of male humanity. This may not be relevant to the subject under discussion, but still it is worthy of consideration.

In a recent conversation with an intelligent prostitute, who happened to be under my professional care, I was informed that the men who seek houses of ill-fame for the purpose of having their perverted sexual impulses gratified, are chiefly to be found among the high-toned clubmen and ultra-fashionables. When we consider the favorable circumstances under which such men are placed as regards inhibitory influences, the excessively developed sexual propensity of the negro, while horrifying in its criminal results,

is not more appalling than the sexual crimes of his white brother.

In considering the special causes which account for the frequency with which the crime of rape is perpetrated by the negro in this country, several factors must be taken into consideration:

1. *Hereditary influences descending from the uncivilized ancestors of our negroes.* When we take into consideration the ancestry of the American negro, and reflect upon the peculiar sexual relations sustained by that ancestry, it is by no means surprising that ancestral traits crop out occasionally. Marriage among certain negro tribes is as close a simulation of what is designated as rape in civilized communities as could well be imagined. When the Ashantee warrior knocks down his prospective bride with a club and drags her off into the woods, he presents an excellent prototype illustration of the criminal sexual acts of the negro in the United States. You will understand, my dear doctor, that this argument does not apply alone to the negro, for I believe that sexual crimes on the part of white men are due to a similar atavistic manifestation of savagery. Many centuries of civilzation, with an inherent as well as acquired capacity of appreciation of those social obligations which constitute the greatest good to the greatest number, have done much for the white race—which is essentially a mixed type, after all. Consider, on the other hand, how short a time such influences have been brought to bear upon the American negro. Consider, also, if you please, that the evolution of the negro can be only said to have fairly begun with his liberation, for then, and then only, did he become an independent factor in the body social.

2. *A disproportionate development of the animal propensities incidental to a relatively low degree of differentiation of type.* A disproportionate development of the animal propensities associated with a relatively low differentiation of type is necessarily involved in the preceding factor of heredity. It is a racial characteristic, and one which, for physical reasons, cross-breeding will never eliminate, for the reason that cross-breeding in the case of the negro means eventually his destruction. The line of demarkation between the negro and the Caucasian races is too strongly marked to result otherwise. Cross-breeding, which is so beneficial in improving the stock in some instances, fails altogether in the case of miscegenation of the white and negro races. The result is a degenerate type which very frequently has all the evil propensities of the negro *plus* those of the white man, associated with a physique of a much more degenerate type than either of the ancestors. When, however, certain inhibitory influences characteristic of the higher type of the white man are well developed in the mulatto, as they are likely to be from acquirement,—by a more intimate association with the white race as well as from white heredity,—the mulatto may be much less liable to sexual crimes than his negro ancestor.

3. *A relatively defective development of what may be termed the centers of psychological inhibition.* This defect is characteristic of all races of a low grade of civilization and a relatively low grade of intellectual development. This with some races might in time be corrected; but it certainly has not yet been corrected in the case of the negro, nor do I think that it ever can be corrected in the negro as a distinctive racial type.

4. *Physical degeneracy involving chiefly the higher and more recently-acquired attributes, with a distinct tendency to reversion of type, which reversion is especially manifest in the direction of sexual proclivities.* This will at once appeal to you as a rational proposition, and it is as true as the law of evolution itself. It applies not only to the negro race, but to all races. It applies, perhaps, with especial force to race under consideration.

When a race of a low type of development is subjected to an emotionally intellectual strain, inhibitory or restraining ideas and impulses are affected, and the primitive instincts bring to the surface manifestations of lust or bloodthirstiness, singly or combined. The Anabaptists of the Lutheran Reformation threw all restraint to the winds and indulged in sexual murders. These Anabaptists were chiefly serfs, who had been inflamed by fallacious notions of the clergy emanating from the time-honored text: "And they (the disciples had all things in common, in love preferring one another." That influences of this character affect the negro race in consequence of the preaching of that equality which degrades, is witnessed by the circumstance that the cases of insanity due to the physiological commotion of puberty are thrice as frequent in Illinois as in New York. In New York, negroes, owning a certain amount of property had been allowed to vote for at least forty years prior to the War between the States. The negro had been gradually evolved into a phase of theoretical equality as regards his citizenship, which led him to measure matters by the highest standard possible to his own race. Such a condition of things necessarily imposed inhibitions upon his animality. The negro, under these circumstances, could not consider himself the

victim of oppressive laws formulated by the whites, as his own race for several decades had functionated in law-making. Law, therefore, with such negroes, was to be respected rather than condemned. The reverse was true in Illinois, in which State te negro passed with one bound, from a condition of serfdom, in which there was no stimulus to independent thought, to an insolent assumption of superiority. The old adage that "if you put a beggar on horseback he rides to the devil" would apply very accurately to the negroes thus suddenly thrown upon their own responsibility.

The influences which I have enumerated are even greater in our Southern States, in which the delusion of forty acres and a mule" very soon destroyed the cumpulsory thrift characteristic of the negro in slavery. Remember, my dear sir, that slavery merely bottled up the primitive instincts. All there was of thrift and decency in his character was impressed upon him in a more or less arbitrary manner by his owners. It was not the product of that evolution which has characterized the negroes of New York State, for example, who have been more or less segregated, and in a general way have been exposed to an environment favorable to their evolution. The influences of carpet-bag government, as depicted in Pike's "Prostrate State," were a very powerful factor in destroying negro respect for law and order in the South. I cannot lay as much stress as I would like to do upon this point for lack of time; but the indoctrination of the fallacious and pernicious teaching of the carpet bagger (which gave the degraded negro an exaggerated estimate of his own personal importance as based upon the market value of his vote, and also imparted to him the idea that behind him, as he

went to the polls, stood a phantom army of Republican soldiers with bayonets fixed) has done much to increase the insolence and criminal impulses of the negro in the South.

5. *The removal of certain inhibitions placed upon the negro by the conditions which slavery imposed upon him; these were removed by his liberation.* This I consider to be by far the most important cause of the sexual crimes among the negroes of the South at the present day. Remember, please, that the negroes were simply goods and chattels; independence of thought and action was with them more theoretical than practical, and certainly had very little bearing—in whatever degree it may have existed—upon their relations with the white race. They were accustomed to obey the dictates of their owners, whatever those dictates may have been. Their environment was narrow; their conditions for development from the standpoint of an appreciation of their relations to the body social were peculiar; their thinking was largely done for them by others. Indeed, the necessity for independent thought and action did not exist as you and I understand it to exist among the white race. Attachment to the families of their masters, a general sense of obligation to the latter for their own sustenance prevailed. Privation and want— those frequent causes of degeneracy —were unknown among them. Personal responsibility of a physical character for crimes and misdeeds was a prominent factor of their daily lives. Corporeal punishment for misdeeds was more awesome to them at that time than the fear of the bullet or rope today. Some of the inhibitory influences of plantation life were due to colonization; that is to say, mass influence was felt. The desirability of good behavior—

indeed, the absolute necessity for it—was a dominant influence pervading each little negro community.

Again, as far as sexual impulses were concerned, the negro on the plantation had more facility for matrimonial alliances—notwithstanding the possibility for separation by the sale of one or the other of contracting parties—than the average negro at the present day.

I will not dwell exhaustively upon the evil influence of certain individuals among the whites in the South who were not inclined to respect even the sexual rights of their goods and chattels; but I will take the liberty of stating, in passing, that in some cases in which the negro has exhibited an inappreciation of his proper status from a sexual standpoint, he may have had rather a bad example set him by his white brethren. I do not think that this particular point is by any means as important as certain Northern blatherskites have endeavored to make us believe; still I cannot help recalling a remark which a rather fast young man from the South once made to me, which was to the effect that a young man who fornicated was not apt to injure his social standing even though his indiscretions were known, provided he confined his indulgence to prostitutes and negroes. A single instance of this kind may do an incalculable amount of damage to the Southern-Caucasian side of the negro question.

In concluding this etiological division, I will state that it should be by no means surprising that the negro, when thrown upon his own responsibility, with a complete removal of all the inhibitory influences of his previous bondage, should be unable to adapt himself to his new environment. This is by no means apologetic for the criminal acts of the negro, but is

simply an argument worthy of the consideration of those sentimental idiots who believe that the negro question is one entirely of skin and political complexion. Such sentimentalists will one day awaken to a realization of the fact that the negro question is one of the most serious with which we are confronted at the present time, and one which may be settled by the physical degeneracy and death of the negro race, but which can only be settled in that way. It certainly cannot be settled by political manipulations of any kind, or by sentimental arguments.

6. *An inherent inadaptability to his environment both from a moral and a legal standpoint, the result of this inadaptability being an imperfect or perverted conception of his relations to his environment—i. e., to the body social.* This inherent inadaptability to environment, while applicable to the negro race in its savage condition, is by no means so potent in its influence as in civilized communities. In his primitive condition, the social environment of the negro consists of a very simple system, adaptation to which is a comparatively easy matter. Placed in the midst of refined civilization, adaptation to environment becomes at once a matter of great difficulty.

We must consider also the fact that the first real attempt on the part of the Southern negro to adapt himself to his new surroundings in this country began with the close of our Civil War. Prior to that time, as I have already outlines, the negro could hardly be said to be an independent factor, nor did he have an opportunity of demonstrating whether or not he was capable of adapting himself to his surroundings, for the simple reason that he was under the domination of guiding, intelligent individuals of a superior, more civilized and more refined race. Consider also the

fact that the South has only recently fairly emerged from the unsettled condition which the disturbed social, financial and political relations incident to our most terrible war imposed upon it. Indeed the magnificent possibilities of the new South are even yet unappreciated by other sections of our common country. Even the Southern people themselves, I firmly believe, have not appreciated as they should the great resources of what I personally consider the grandest portion of the United States. With political turmoil, commercial confusion, social disintegration surrounding them, is it a great wonder that the negro, suddenly thrown upon his own resources, should develop highly criminal tendencies? Loyalty to the master, respect for the mistress, and affection for the children of those who once cared for him, melted away like dew before the sun under the fortuitous circumstances in which he was suddenly placed, and with the disappearance of the old-time slave, in whose mind many inhibiting influences of slavery still remained, and with the incoming of a new and more degenerate generation of his descendants, it is little wonder that criminality on the part of the negro should have increased in the South. Taking into consideration his disproportionate sexual development and propensities, it is by no means surprising that with the removal of inhibitions sexual crimes should result.

Inadaptability to environment is by no means confined to the negro race. We have found that some other alien races imported into this country have been social, political, moral, and commercial misfits. The Chinaman will never make a good citizen. Fortunately, however, his natural instincts do not partake so much of the animal type as is the case with the

negro, for the Chinaman of to-day is the product of a comparatively high grade of civilization, or semi-civilization, which has prevailed for many centuries, and which has developed certain inhibitions upon the purely animal propensities. The artistic talent of the Chinese is in itself an evidence in favor of this argument, for *pari passu* with the development of a taste and faculty for artistic pursuits there occurs a development of the higher inhibitory faculties. The industry of the Chinaman in his natural condition—to say nothing of that which is exemplified in his relations to our community when he settles among us—is another factor to be taken into consideration.

The natural shiftlessness of the negro, when left to himself, is simply a reversion to the primitive type, which is well illustrated by the Zulu, who is content with a breech clout, a plentiful supply of grease for his glossy hide, and plenty of wives to minister to his various appetites. Let me again emphasize the fact, that it has been but a short span between the Zulu and the negro as we see him to-day. How much of inhibitory faculties could we expect to develop in a race, primarily so barbarous, within so short a time?

7. *An incapacity of appreciation of the dire results to himself of sexual crimes:* This incapacity is quite characteristic of individuals of a low type of organization, and such little sense of personal responsibility as a large proportion of the negro race possesses is readily inhibited by excitement of the lower brain centers, such as may be produced by anger, alcohol, or the *furor sexualis.* It has been my experience that individuals of refined nervous organization and sensibilities are more likely to hold a wholesome respect for capital punishment than those of a lower type. A keener appreciation of their present existence and a

greater dread of the possibilities after death certainly actuate such persons. The higher faculties of the brain, those of reason and ideation, are relatively more strongly developed than in the lower types of humanity, and there exists a proportionate lack of development of the lower or more strictly animal centers. When, therefore, a struggle for the mastery arises between the reasoning faculties and animal impulses, the balance is very likely to be in favor of the former, particularly when the keen sense of personal responsibility comes into play.

You will pardon me, I am sure, when I say that the seeds of religion sown upon the soil of ignorance and superstition characteristic of the negro have had much to do with the development of criminality in the negro race. I sometimes wonder whether no religion at all would not be better than any religion for a large proportion of individuals among the negroes. It is said that most executed criminals go from the scaffold straight to heaven. I doubt whether there ever was a negro who did not believe that he was heavenward bound as he stood upon the scaffold or confronted the righteous indignation of the citizens of the community in which he had committed an outrage. We have not so very far to look backwards from the pious and superstitious negro upon the scaffold, who believes that he is on the short-cut to Heaven, to the Zulu, who in battle courts death because the heathen religion of his fathers has taught him to believe that an eternity of happiness lies just beyond his enemy's spear or bullet.

The same superstition animates the Musselman, who, as the charging hosts of the "accursed Frank" pass over his wounded body, hamstrings the horses or spears the riders, in a desperate attempt to bring

death upon himself that he may go straight to the arms of Mohammed in the Paradise of the faithful.

When all inhibitions of a high order have been removed by sexual excitement, I fail to see any difference from a physical standpoint between the *sexual furor* of the negro and that which prevails among the lower animals in certain instances and at certain periods. This is not confined to the negro, but is true, although less frequently, in certain instances of sexual criminals among the white race. Kiernan, in the *Journal of Nervous aud Mental Diseases* in 1885, called attention to a fact which is very pertinent to our present inquiry—namely, that the *furor sexualis* in the negro resembles similar sexual attacks in the bull and elephant, and the running amuck of the Malay race. This *furor sexualis* has been especially frequent among the negroes in States cursed by carpet-bag statesmanship, in which frequent changes in the social and commercial status of the negro race have occurred.

The reversion of type in the negro is both physical and intellectual, and must be taken into serious consideration, as bearing directly upon the question: Is it practicable to remedy the resulting evils by either legal or illegal methods of punishment?

An interesting story is told by the cannibalistic sexual rites of Hayti and Liberia and the enormous increase in Southern Voodoo Phallic worship since the War. When sexuality finds vent in phallic worship it is relatively harmless as regards the individual. When it cannot be vented in this manner it results in sexual crime.

The greater frequency of rape by negroes in the South as compared with the North is, I think, indisputable and requires greater consideration. The

climate of the South is much more favorable to the perpetuation of the primitive impulses of the negro race than is that of the North. A reversion of type—both physical and intellectual—is more likely to occur under the influence of that climate which most nearly approximates that in which the negro race was originally bred. The influence of climate upon the sexual function has a powerful bearing not only upon the negro race, but upon the Caucasian. The relatively unsettled condition of the South after the War as compared with the North—to which allusion has already been made—has had much to do with the comparatively greater frequency of sexual crimes.

Again, the Northern negro has necessarily been surrounded by more inhibitory influences than the negro of the South. The lower class of whites with whom he has most frequently been brought in contact have been better situated as regards opportunities for honest industry. They have been by virtue of the climate more energetic, and this necessarily must have had a certain degres of influence upon the negro. The North has been more prosperous, and consequently the opportunities for obtaining a comfortable subsistence have been better for the negro than in the South. The negro of the North has not been so much subjected to the mass influence—*i. e.*, he has been more individualistic than in the South, where large numbers of negroes are found together. In order that civilization should have a fair chance to influence the negro, he must have more opportunities for segregation than in the South.

The enormous increase of the negro since the War has had much to do with his physical and intellectual degeneracy and therefore with his criminal

propensities. As man descends in the scale of differentiation, the number of offspring at a birth approximates the multiple pregnancies of the lower strata of animal life. Morel, De Monteyel, Hagen, and one of our most eminent American writers—Kiernan—have conclusively shown that multiple pregnancies are most frequent among the degenerate types of humanity. The offspring in such multiple pregnancies are defective from an obvious double cause; upon them all degrading influences act with greater power.

Your remarks, my dear doctor, anent the quality and quantity of food eaten by the Southern negro since the War, as compared with that which he obtained before the great struggle, have, I think, much weight; but I do not think that they have so important a bearing upon the question which you have done me the honor to submit to me as the lack of systematic occupation and the forced assumption of responsibility for which he was, by nature and training, unfit—to say nothing of the acquirement of vices and profligate indulgence for which he had relatively few opportunities while he was in bondage, and for which he was directly responsible to those whose interest it was to keep him in the best possible condition morally and physically.

I can only compliment you, sir, upon the comprehensiveness with which, in a general way, you have, in your letter, covered the causes of physical degeneracy and the present extraordinary prevalence of diseases of nutrition among the negro race, particularly as seen in the South.

Although I have discussed most of the points which I believe should be incorporated in my reply to your communication, I feel that I cannot leave the

subject without touching upon certain points in which I fear many of my Southern friends will not agree with me. These points involve a consideration of a remedy for the alarming prevalence of sexual crimes among the negroes of the South. It is hardly necessary to state that I am not going to discuss the question from the standpoint of political buncombe, maudlin sentimentality, and intentional bias of certain blatherskite newspapers in the North. I shall be as utilitarian as possible; whether I am philosophical or not, must remain for you to judge.

You speak of the "unwritten law of every community in the South, from which there is no appeal." Now, my dear doctor, what has been accomplished by this law? In answer to this question, I have only to quote your assertion: "Sexual crimes on the part of the negro in the South are becoming more and more frequent." This is all, I believe, that it is necessary for me to say with regard to the general utility of the practical application of your "unwritten law." I do not say that lynch law is always ineffective, for I spent the earlier years of my life in a community in which it was most decidedly so. One of my earliest recollections was that of the exploits of vigilance committees and those decidedly informal trials held by Judge Lynch in the early days of the history of California—my native State. The conditions, however, which prevailed at that time were decidedly different from those which prevail in the South. Judge Lynch has accomplished great good in many isolated instances in this country. It has only been in isolated instances, however, and under special and limited conditions, such as those involved in temporary emergencies due to local lawlessness. Lynch law, however, has seemed to have too large a contract upon

its hands in the Southern States, as far as the acts of lawlessness at present under consideration are concerned.

Before going further, perhaps it might be well for me to place myself upon record as opposed to capital punishment, legal or illegal. From a sentimental standpoint? Most emphatically no. From a utilitarian standpoint, I have failed to see wherein capital punishment has, in the aggregate, repressed those crimes for which it is prescribed. The census returns show the lowest proportion of capital crimes in this country is in the three States in which capital punishment has been abolished. Even in the olden days of public and bloody executions capital crimes were none the less rampant because of those executions. On the contrary, capital punishment seemed to have a direct effect in increasing the savagery of, and lessening the respect for human life entertained by, the body social. No matter how scientifically and legally an execution may be done, it is still a sacrifice of a human life, and as such has a demoralizing effect upon the community. If, then, this be true, and capital punishment fails of its object, wherein can it be condoned?

I am not inclined to captiously criticise, mind you, the typical Southern method of dealing with negro ravishers—for I would probably be as quick to act similarly under like circumstances—but do you think that any reasoning whatever could justify the recent roasting of a negro ravisher in one of the Southern States? The punishment of that negro, while well deserved and horrible enough to satisfy the most epicurean taste from the standpoint of revenge, could not possibly be any more effectual than if his life had

been taken in a more humane manner by the bullet or rope.

With the departure of the vital spark from that negro, all impression made by the execution, as far as he was concerned, ceased. To the negro population of the country, however, an impression was conveyed to the effect that a barbarous discrimination against one of their race had been exhibited. The justice of the punishment in that case will ever be obscured by the barbarity of its execution. The impression made upon the community in which it happened can be imagined.

I object to any method of punishment which is followed by forgetfulness on the part of surviving prospective criminals. With them, current events soon obliterate all recollections of the criminal, his crime, and its punishment.

To my mind, there is only one logical method of dealing with capital crimes and criminals of the habitual class—namely, *castration.* This method of punishment leaves behind it evidences which will prove a wholesome warning to criminals of like propensities. It prevents the criminal from perpetuating his kind. The murderer is likely to lose much of his savageness; the violator loses not only the desire but the capacity for a repetition of his crime, if the operation be supplemented by penile mutilation according to the Oriental method. A few emasculated negroes scattered around through the thickly-settled negro communities of the South would really prove the conservation of energy, as far as the repression of sexual crimes is concerned. Executed, they would be forgotten; castrated and free, they would be a constant warning and ever-present admonition to others of their race. Thus, I believe that castration would

be peculiarly applicable to the class of criminals under consideration; while, at the same time, claiming that it is the rational method of dealing with the crime question in many of its phases.

I cannot leave this subject without allusion to your remark that the moral and physical degeneration of the negro will eventually destroy the race upon this continent. This, I think, is true; but it is not, after all, a remedy worthy of consideration, for the more degraded a race becomes the more frequent crimes against law and order will become. While perhaps it would not be desirable to prevent the inevitable in the case of the negro, there might be much of benefit to ourselves in retarding the march of the inevitable as long as we can by improving the physical condition and intellectual status of the negro race. Manual training and education will do much for the negroes of the South ; and if our government in the past had paid more attention to these factors in the development of the negroes, who were suddenly thrown upon their own responsibility, and less attention to the cultivation and harvesting of the negro vote, it would have been far better for the South.

Few, indeed, of the people in the North, can appreciate the terrible burden which the liberation of the slaves threw upon the people of the South. I believe that slavery was wrong as firmly as I believe anything ; but it really was a pity to throw the burdens of this wrong—which originally was legalized, encouraged, and fostered by practically the entire country—upon that section of the country to which it was finally confined. As a matter of fact, the negro was turned loose to seek his own salvation; and aside from the influence of carpet-bag politics and a decidedly warm interest in his vote, practically nothing

was done to by the government to ameliorate his condition or to improve his intellectual and physical status. The burden imposed upon the South was still greater on account of the impoverished and demoralized condition of the white people in that section, resulting from the great struggle between the States. What has been done since the War, aside from the political interest in the negro exhibited by the Government, has been of a sporadic character, and due to individual philanthropy on the one hand, or an appreciation on the part of the Southerner of the necessity for self-defense by the improvement of the negro, on the other.

With respect to the amalgamation of the negro and white races in this country, we are confronted with a very trying problem. The progeny of cross-breeding often has all the vices of both ancestors and the virtues of neither. He is also physically degenerate. I doubt that he has, as a rule, as well-marked impulses of a purely animal nature as characterizes the negro element in his ancestry. One great difficulty in the case of cross-breeding of white and negro is the everlasting tendency to a reversion of type, which atavism results quite uniformly in the development of the negro type.

On the whole, I am inclined to think, with proper educational and physical training of the individuals of mixed blood, extensive cross-breeding may eventually be of value in the solution of the problem which you have submitted to me. The prejudice and legal restrictions which attempts at miscegenation have met with in the South, have perhaps, after all, not been conducive to the final improvement of the relations between the two races. It would hardly be becoming in me to advocate miscegenation. I simply

desire to raise the question whether or not, from a utilitarian standpoint, its general application would eventually solve the problem of "What shall we do with the negro?" Permit me to say that none of the arguments that I have ever been able to formulate, and none of the opinions that I have ever read, have enabled me to see in the negro question anything but a most perplexing, harrassing and important problem, of which the question you have done me the honor to present to me for consideration is by no means the least important. It may be selfish in me, but I am rather thankful that the responsibility of solving the problem in a radical manner—and such radical solution must come sooner or later—will necessarily devolve upon another generation than my own.

A point well worth of attention, in seeking to remedy the evils which so vitally interest the Southerner, is this: Much may be done with the negro by a proper example on the part of the white race, which must of necessity be his model, socially, politically and morally. Ignorance of sexual physiology has led the average white boy, at the age of puberity, to believe, that fornication is a necessity—or, at least, a luxury at which the whole world winks. You know only too well the train of misery following the indoctrination of such ideas. This fallacious idea is responsible for much of prostitution and sexual crime. Parents abhor its discussion; physicians abhor it as a *béte noir*. Sentimentality and morals aside, the most materialistic of us must acknowledge that sexual purity is wholesome in its effects. The remedy for the evils of youth and early manhood is, never to begin indulgences that create physical and injurious necessities.

In conclusion, my dear Doctor, permit me to state that I am fully aware that I have not adequately discussed the question which you have submitted to me. I fear, moreover, that my reply may be unsatisfactory to you; but I assure you that I am ready to receive more light upon the subject, and am decidedly open to conviction.

Thanking you for your kind consideration and the compliment which you have paid me, I have the honor to remain,

Very fraternally and faithfully yours,

G. Frank Lydston.

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